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AUTHOR Morris, Loretta R.
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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between preschool attendance and placement in compensatory education and retention rates in grades kindergarten through 3. Participating were 292 students in kindergarten through grade 3 in 1994-96 at a small elementary school serving a lower to middle class population in West Virginia. Students were placed into two groups based on preschool attendance; the number of students not attending preschool was selected randomly from the non-preschool group to comprise a sample equal in number to the group of children which had attended preschool. The two groups were compared for school retention and placement in compensatory education programs such as Title 1 Reading or Math, speech therapy, or services for children with learning disabilities. Findings indicated that students who had been in preschool were less likely to have been retained or placed in compensatory education programs than students who had no preschool experience. About 18 percent of the students in the preschool group received compensatory education or had been retained, in comparison to 50 percent in the non-preschool group. (Contains 19 references.) (KB)

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A STUDY OF CHILDREN IN KINDERGARTEN, FIRST, SECOND, AND THIRD GRADES AT RONCEVERTE ELEMENTARY AND THE EXTENT PRESCHOOL HAS ON RETENTION AND COMPENSATORY EDUCATION

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the Master of Arts Degree Program

Salem-Teikyo University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education

by

Loretta R. Morris

May 1997

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Salem, West Virginia

This thesis submitted by Loretta R. Morris has been approved meeting the research requirements for the Master of Arts Degree.

8.14.97	Gaby van der Giessen	Thesis Committee Chair
Date	Gaby van der Giessen, Ph.D.	
8/17/97	Phyllis Freedman	
Date	Dr. Phyllis Freedman	Second Reader
8/25/97	Dale Thorngate	
Date	Dr. Dale Thorngate	Third Reader

Salem -Teikyo University

Graduate Program

Thesis Committee

Student Name: Loretta R. Morris

Thesis Title: A Study of Children in Kindergarten, First, Second, and Third Grades at Ronceverte Elementary and the Extent Preschool has on Retentions and Compensatory Education

Brief Synopsis: This study was concerned with four grades at Ronceverte Elementary for two years, 1994 to 1995 and 1995 to 1996. The study involved compiling lists of the students for the two years in grades kindergarten, first, second, and third then listing students who had attended preschool. The students were divided into the Preschool and No-Preschool Groups and then the lists were compared to lists of compensatory education and retentions from permanent record cards. The data was analyzed by the chi-square for independence, rejecting the hypothesis that preschool had no effect on retention and enrollment in compensatory education.

Chairperson: _____

Committee Member: _____

Committee Member: _____

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

This study was conducted in Greenbrier County in the state of West Virginia at Ronceverte Elementary located in the community of Ronceverte, on the Greenbrier River. The rural school is an elementary school with grades, kindergarten through sixth with approximately 450 students. Socioeconomically, the population within the school ranges from lower to middle class. Students are bussed to the school with approximately 50 percent on free or reduced lunch.

A decline in enrollment in this school has been noted each year since 1975. The immediate area has mainly two industries, both of which depend on timber. As a result of the flood of 1996 some businesses have closed causing unemployment to increase and enrollment to decrease even more.

This study focused on children who had either attended preschool before entering Ronceverte Elementary and students who had not attended preschool. A list of students was compiled from Greenbrier Head Start, Kiddie Kondo, and Ronceverte Community Nursery School, the three feeder programs for Ronceverte Elementary. The Students had attended Ronceverte Elementary in grades kindergarten through third.

Group A consisted of students who attended preschool before entering kindergarten and Group B consisted of students who had not attended preschool. The students were enrolled at Ronceverte Elementary Kindergartens in developmentally appropriate early childhood programs. Each group contained approximately ten subjects in each group for each of the grade levels: kindergarten, first, second, and third. The list of each grade level were compiled with a Group A list, had attended preschool and a Group B list, had not attended preschool. The lists were in alphabetical order with every third child being included in the study. This insured random selection of the subjects. The two lists were grouped by grade levels rather than by teacher lists to insure randomness.

The study looked at two years completed, grades kindergarten through third, 1994 to 1995 and 1995 to 1996. The study looked at the retention of students in each grade. It also took into account the relation to previous enrollment in preschool. The study compared how students in both groups received compensatory education in these two years of school and whether fewer retentions or enrollment in compensatory education would occur?

Statement of the Problem

"In the 1960's the race was on in education and the new theory for preschool and kindergarten programs was that the earlier the introduction to academics the better these students would achieve in later schooling" (Bowlin, 1991, p.1).

The research study attempted to answer the question whether the children from the three feeder programs of preschool experience had fewer retentions and placement in compensatory education programs than children who did not attend preschool. The study investigated whether preschool promoted social adjustment and academic achievement in grades kindergarten, first, second, and third. The research attempted to confirm whether preschool was an indicator of success. This was determined by studying random lists of students in Group A that had attended preschool and Group B that had not attended preschool.

The question that must be taken into consideration is, " Does attending preschool provide the necessary background to give at-risk children a better chance at the elementary level" (Bowlin, p. 4).

Purpose of the Study

Early childhood educators try to teach each child at the appropriate level of their literacy experience. For this reason many people wonder if a child's success in school depends on the fact that they were enrolled in a preschool program. "These and other studies have implications for children who spend a greater portion or their waking hours in preschools rather than at home" (Abouzeid, 1994, p. 4).

In the past decades, the trend was that parents gave children their background of learning by reading and teaching them the alphabet at home. Today, however, more and more children are enrolled in some type of preschool program or childcare situation. The findings supported previous research that linked literacy acquisition with literacy experiences that used to occur in the home (Abouzeid, p. 7).

The following research questions that guided the study may be summarized as follows:

1. Can a difference in academic success be identified to exist between students who attended preschool and those who did not attend preschool?

2. Can a difference in the students who were retained or who needed compensatory education be dependent upon whether they were enrolled in a preschool program or who did not attend preschool programs?

3. Can a difference be identified in academic success and social adjustment in the students who had preschool or those who had not attended preschool?

The records of children enrolled in kindergarten, first, second, and third grade at Ronceverte Elementary were examined. It became clear that many children had been enrolled in a preschool program prior to entering Ronceverte Elementary. Those subjects were compared to the lists of students who had not received any compensatory education or been retained in the 1994 to 1995 and 1995 to 1996 school years.

The Abouzeid study attempted to investigate whether children who had attended preschool were more successful in the first four years of public school or whether there was no difference. The study clearly intended to show preschool teachers must incorporate into their daily curriculum, literacy experiences that children of earlier generations received informally in the home environment (Abouzeid, p. 8).

Significance of the Study

This study attempted to determine whether there was a difference in retentions and fewer placements in compensatory education of children who had been enrolled in a preschool program. The inclusion of literacy activities in a preschool curriculum suggested by Abouzeid supported the need for attendance in a preschool for success in grades kindergarten through third grade (Abouzeid, 1994, p. 7)..

Seawell suggests that all children can benefit from quality prekindergarten experience and be of be of particular value, both in the short-and-long-term, to children who are "at-risk" for academic and social failure (Seawell, 1992, p.1).

Definitions of Terms

Compensatory education were those classes which help to balance instruction to students by giving them meaning or influence in areas where they are lagging behind. Examples: Title 1 Reading, Title 1 Math, Speech, Learning Disabilities, EMI, or Behavioral (Bowlin, 1991).

Culture was the way people dress, the language they speak, the foods they eat and the music they listen to (Clark, 1995).

Developmentally appropriate kindergarten was a child-centered integrated curriculum, which had the scope and sequence to meet the individual needs of each student and helps to build social and imaginative strengths and honors what is known about cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development of each child (Passidomo, 1994).

Ecological view of education was all public, private and informal agencies and settings that care for and educate the child from birth to age five (Feurst, 1996).

Individual growth was the individual student's development and when it was going well he or she can be described as thriving (Katz, 1994).

Preschool was any organized program geared towards the purpose of social competence and the extension of a student's knowledge under the age of five which will aid in the transition to public school (Haymes, 1990).

Print-rich classroom was a classroom, which had words, charts with words along the walls of the room or labeled items in the room (Gronlund, 1995).

Play was an active way children demonstrated their understanding of their world and stimulated intellectual development (Ruenzel, 1996).

Assumptions and Limitations

The following limitations were considered in this study. The county or state did not mandate a curriculum at the preschool level so each group had different levels of skills when they entered the developmentally appropriate kindergarten. The maturation age of each child could only be determined by nature. The number of boys versus girls that attend preschool could not be controlled.

The number of students in the study varied grade to grade because of the sizes of the classes as well as the number of subjects in Group A, who had attended preschool. The study was unable to consider the socioeconomic or ecological influence on either group of subjects.

The people and area in Greenbrier County were limited by what was provided for preschool because of the charge for private preschools and the limit placed on incomes to qualify for the Head Start Program. This prevented many middle to middle-low income parents from enrolling their children in preschool.

The parents who deemed it worthy for their children to attend preschool could not be controlled; this factor was already predetermined. No reviews of any background or family information were included in this study.

The study assumed that the preschools and the elementary school would keep complete enrollment records for at least ten years. The limitation of the years that the preschools kept records of the students enrolled was five years and the elementary only kept a complete classroom roster for the two previous years.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether a child who had been enrolled in preschool would have more success in kindergarten, first, second, and third grade. The study hoped to determine whether these children who had preschool required less retention and compensatory education.

Head Start

"If you had to name one of the most popular and widely supported federal social welfare programs, you'd probably pick Head Start" (Feurst, 1996, p. 676). Head Start was one of the first preschool programs in the United States, starting over thirty years ago. The principle that Head Start was founded on in the last thirty years was that intervention in early childhood provides substantial improvement in student's performance and contributes to reducing or eliminating social problems facing poor families. The High/Scope Perry Preschool Project (1985) conducted a longitudinal study of 123 children where half of the children received one year of early childhood education and found that these children experienced fewer referrals

to compensatory education classes and had fewer retentions in grade" (Feurst, 1996, p. 676).

A fifteen-year long study, conducted by the Chicago Board of Education and reported by William Rice in 1989, studied 3,000 graduates of one-and-two year preschool programs with 1,700 control-group of children. The eighth-grade reading and math scores of the children from the preschool group were found to be somewhat lower than those of the control group—a factor, apparently the result of the slightly higher socioeconomic status of the children in the control group. When the results were adjusted to account for that factor, the reading and math scores of the preschool group were no better that those of the control group. Similarly, the graduation rates of the children with one or two years of preschool training were no better than those of the children without preschool (Feurst, 1996, p. 677).

This article stated that Head Start was not pointless or worthless, but concluded that more preschool training, not less, was desirable for children starting as early as age three. Head Start can significantly improve school performance of poor children thus contributing to the reduction of social

problems facing lower income families. This can reduce illiteracy, unemployment, and crime. Fuerst (1996) stated that Head Start experience should be extended to children of all economics to enrich and boost all children starting school. The study also brought out that the quality of the program should be high in repetition and positive reinforcement. Feurst (1996) showed that emphasis should be on parent participation in any preschool program. Such programs should focus primarily on schools with the greatest concentrations of students in poverty and to a lesser extent on schools with lower poverty rates. To those who argued that providing such a program would be far too costly, one might respond that it would be too costly not to do so. How many future social and economic problems would be avoided—and many future federal, state, and local tax dollars would be saved—by investing now in better school achievement, better graduation rates, and better occupational success for tomorrow's teenagers and adults (Feurst, 1996, p. 678).

"Kindergarten is now a nearly universal experience for children in the United States with 98% of all children attending kindergarten prior to first grade" (Zill, 1995, pg. 35). The population of children has increased diversely by race, ethnicity, cultural background, education level, income

status, and language background. The majority of children have had some type of childcare center or preschool experience. Schools in the United States were expected to respond to the diversity in each child's background. The relative importance of individual risk factors were recognized and adjusted to the development domain of each student (Zill, 1995, p. 38).

The benefits of preschool attendance aided by periodic growth of children of high-risk and low-risk families were linked to higher emerging literacy scores in four-year-olds and remained significant when other children and family characteristics were taken into account. Fewer behavioral and speech difficulties and better health status in preschoolers had been associated with preschool attendance (Zill, p. 78).

Teachers must accept the diversity in all children and make a commitment to meet all children's educational and development needs. Sufficient funds, training, and resources must be available for teachers to nurture all children (Zill, p. 78).

Early Childhood Education was described by Elicker, as a human relationships laboratory that continued to develop and refine guidelines for developmentally appropriate early childhood programs. The programs were to emphasize a warm and positive relationship between adults and children

who ranged in age from birth to 3 years old. The emphases of a warm and positive relationship were clearly implied in the program guidelines for children older than 3 (Elicker, 1995, p. 69). A relationship defined by Elicker (1995) revealed the occurrence of social exchanges between people as well as a chain of interactions. Relationships had the following characteristics:

1) a history that occurred over time, built on interactions between people;

2) mutual goals and expectations, where children and adults give gentle support towards their expectations and goals;

3) observed and interpreted emotions, thoughts and special meanings and the emotional impact of each child's experience with each adult. Adults around preschoolers should note the child's behavior, interactions with peers or adults, and understand the history, meaning, and emotional impact of adult-child relationships.

Elicker (1995) pointed out that children who developed a secure attachment and a positive relationship with their teachers had received sensitive, responsive care and had good relationships with their parents. If

children had a positive relationship with their preschool teachers they had an easier adjustment in the new environment of public school that would act as an important "development buffer" (Elicker, 1995, p.71). Fewer behavior problems and higher competence occurred in high-risk students who had a positive teacher-child relationship. These relationships could be contributed to making adolescents and adults well adjusted and self-sufficient (Elicker, 1995, p.71).

Children with positive peer relationships in preschool were more flexible in their behavior and more capable of engaging in complex play compared to children less secure with teacher attachments. Elicker's study (1995) suggested that having a secure attachment with a teacher or caregiver would at least partially compensate for insecure attachment with a parent (Elicker, 1995, p.73).

One of the challenges teachers faced was to develop positive, supportive relationship with all children. Teachers' thoughts, feelings, and behavior towards children influenced these attachments. A child-centered philosophy leads to higher involvement with children with a sensitive and responsive bond (Elicker, 1995, p. 73).

In a preschool program, emphasis should be on a schedule that takes relationships into account with time set aside for informal, unhurried interactions. Time should be less structured and child initiated acts, such as play should be emphasized. If greater emphasis were placed on positive relationships, the benefits of teaching and caring for children would be more rewarding (Elicker, 1995).

Katz (1994) focuses on the question of individual growth and stated that a child may be described as thriving if the child's development was going well. It was important to observe the development of preschoolers in the following areas to determine whether growth was occurring:

1) their range of emotions

2) their ability to initiate and maintain satisfying relationships with one or more peers

3) their ability to vary in their elements and materials of play

4) their ability to accept adult authority

5) their ability to show curiosity and be adventurous

6) their ability to be involved in and able to complete activities

7) their ability to show affection for one of the adults responsible for their care. If all these occurred then the children have enjoyed the "good things of life" and were thriving (Katz, 1994, p.3).

If preschool caretakers observed many of the indicators lacking in children, they found children needed remedial action. In some cases a child's development could get back on track when his or her daily routines were simplified. A way to alleviate stress on the child was to spend quality time with an adult, one on one and become comfortable in the preschool situation (Katz, 1994, p.3).

Preschool emphasis is on individual development and positive relationships where as society stresses higher scores on achievement tests, teachers have been robbed of their optimal potential of teaching. The pressure to demonstrate effectiveness through children's performance on standardized tests not only changed how teachers teach and what children studied, but also seemed to change the very understanding of the nature of learning and achievement (Meisels, 1995, p. 2).

Performance Assessment

Meisels, 1995 recommended a performance assessment that offered a new approach that documented activities in which children engaged on a daily

basis. This type of assessment can be used with ages three to eleven and worked with Head Start and other preschool programs. Performance assessment examines and documents an individual student's growth and progress of skills, knowledge, behavior and accomplishments on a wide variety of educational domains by observation and documentation. Meisels (1995) used portfolios in the Work Sampling System to provide rich documentation of each child's experiences throughout the year. The portfolios contained examples of work that illustrated the child's progress and growth throughout the year. Comments and teacher reflections were used to enhance instruction and provide feedback to parents. This would inform, expand, and structure perceptions while involving children and parents in the learning process (Meisels, 1995, p.2).

"This fall marks the midpoint in the decade dedicated to achievement of our national goals. The first of these goals—ensuring that all children start school ready to learn—reflects our growing appreciation of the importance of healthy development and learning in young children and our growing understanding of the public benefits of investing in high-quality early childhood programs" (Schultz, 1995, p. 60).

Early Childhood Policy

In Schultz's article three themes from the study of early childhood policy emerge. First, the policy and funding system had substantial gaps, flaws, and inadequacies. Second, many managers and staff members were able to overcome shortcomings of policies to create a comprehensive program. And third, some policies limited the scope and innovation local areas could initiate.

Even though there was an emphasis on early childhood education public funding failed to provide equal opportunity for all young children. "In 1991, only 45% of preschool children from low-income families were enrolled in educational programs compared to 73 % children from high-income families--- and this difference in rates of participation was not reduced as of 1993" (Schultz, 1995, p. 6).

There was a quality crisis in that most programs failed to provide a level of service that would optimize children's development and learning. Many preschool settings were unsafe or harmful because standards were not consistent state to state and failed to safeguard the core aspects of programs. Many programs were totally exempt from state regulation or monitoring. The

staffing crisis consisted of high turnovers, low levels of training and experience because of the level of compensation (Schultz, 1995).

The preschool dilemma was caught in the legalities of state and federal government. It was hard to improve a system daunted by structural challenges (Schultz, 1995, p. 6).

Schultz concluded that a coherent system to fund, manage, govern, and support quality in early childhood programs should involve local innovation and local leadership. A component in early childhood programs should be involvement of local communities with a strategy for building stronger family units and contribute to the readiness for all young children entering school (Schultz, 1995).

Clark stated that "educators need to consider what they want children to know and whether the curriculum is consistent with the values of the community and society" (Clark, 1995, p.154). The study by Clark (1995) stated that a curriculum in early childhood education should consider the values and beliefs of a diverse population. The emphasis in curriculum should incorporate self-concept and identify multicultural and anti-bias issues. The family should be used as a resource to gain information on a continuous

basis in the classroom. Play should be an integral part of observing a child's knowledge of his/her surroundings and culture (Clark, 1995).

"Each year thousands of young children begin preschool. Their first days of school are ones marked with a variety of adjustments" (Haymes, 1990, p. 4). Haymes considered the adjustments children face upon entering preschool: separation from parent, new play areas, following instructions, new adults and children to associate with, and learning new routines. Through research, adjustment problems can be identified that can aid preschool programs and aid children at risk for developmental delays in these preschool programs (Haymes, 1990, p. 4).

Planning for the transition at the preschool level was required because of observed varied behaviors exhibited by children who entered preschool. One way to prepare children for the preschool setting was to have a pre-entry visit which would help insure adjustment for the child and promote the ability to function in the new preschool setting (Haymes, 1990, p.11).

Developmentally Appropriate Education

Teachers appreciated pictures of practice in action, whether those pictures were video, slides, or demonstrations that they observed or participated in themselves. A philosophical foundation in curriculum must be

included with some structure providing reasons and justifications for the recommended choices made with children. It became clear, three key elements are in practice in Developmentally Appropriate Programs. First, children learned through active engagement. Teachers recognized that education was the whole process and that they were accountable to the children because the primary purpose was for children to learn, grow, and to develop to their fullest potential (Gronlund, 1995, p.4).

Second, children learned to participate in play with intent and purpose. Children played in order to find their way in a world of adults. Children were able to represent and solve problems through motivated and meaningful play. Through play, children acquired strategies, knowledge and skills to deal with issues of right and wrong and the ability to negotiate with each other. Many teachers were afraid of the second element because they were used to teaching the whole class, testing, and then evaluating their success. Children engaged in learning by doing demonstrated new understanding in many different ways: sorting, organizing, grouping, naming, identifying, questioning, measuring, computing, reading, recording, creating, applying, and so on. Play should be used to stimulate intellectual development in the classroom and to investigate new things (Gronlund, 1995, p. 6).

The third element in a Developmentally Appropriate Program was the idea of moving from the simple to the complex in planning a curriculum that was active and engaging. The child was looked at as an individual, with the development of the scope and sequence of their education geared to age appropriateness. One way of doing this was to continue from the simple, manipulating real objects, to the complex, manipulating of abstract ideas.

A developmentally appropriate program to flourish must be established with a plan of action with vision, skills, incentives, and resources where changes can be made that hold advantages for children. Times was set aside for one-half hour a day, where children could choose their own topics and explore writing through inventive spelling, scribble writing, and pictorial representation. Students were involved as active learning partners and were encouraged to become potential learners (Gronlund, 1995, p. 11).

The change had been slow from a traditional program, where the unwritten goal of kindergarten programs were to teach children enough letters and sounds to help raise scores on standardized tests. In the 1980`s dissenting voices were heard such as, Elkind (1988) who wrote about the "hurried child" and that many of the primary grades were overly academic in atmosphere. Glickman (1979) wrote that a relationship existed between the

declining achievement scores and the absence of play in our schools (Passidomo, 1994, p. 75).

With the adoption of the philosophy of developmentally appropriate education, habits for intellectual growth were learned through play without the child being aware of the phenomena. Developmentally appropriate programs provided learning by using an active, hands-on approach. The change was to take the things that were taught to the whole group and design them for a small group center. Another area of change was to work on children's writing by giving them permission to scribble and draw, the first step in the writing process (Passidomo, 1994).

These changes resulted in teacher made math games, manipulatives, and instances for exploring, discussing, and problem solving in the classroom. Assessment in the developmentally appropriate program consists of observation and recording (Passidomo, 1994).

Parents were enthusiastic with the move to developmentally appropriate programs and more teachers were interested in the approach. Teachers saw through observation and the documentation of students' successes an awareness and motivation toward the change for using a developmentally appropriate program (Passidomo, 1994, p. 78).

Kindergarten

The memories of kindergarten were far less lyrical for a single member of the kindergarten class of 1960 who was determined unfit for the rigors of first grade and was forced into kindergarten for another year. Retention had occurred. Head Start wasn't only the name of a government program but also a slogan suggesting that this program would give the child a head start on learning. Kindergarten programs were in danger of becoming miniature first grades. Kindergarten should provide children with rich experiences while sheltering them during the most vulnerable years. Many parents suspected that an academic focus in the kindergarten was unnecessary if not inappropriate (Ruenzel, 1996, p.27).

Frederick Froeble, a German schoolteacher and philosopher practically invented kindergarten in 1837. He believed that the schoolmaster's function was to point out and make intelligible the inner spiritual nature of things (Ruenzel, 1996, p.28).

Kindergarten programs should nurture children and employ play but have tended to become more functional academic places. In American education, kindergarten saw children as creative beings and education was a

process of self-explanation (Ruenzel, 1996, p. 29). The whole point of the first school year was to strengthen children socially, stretch their imagination, give them a sense of self-confidence, and promote self-esteem. The first year of school was a transition year, getting used to school without the pressure associated with school. Kindergarten should be an expansion of the base program and should focus on active hands-on philosophy including activities of social play. A program should be flexible and open to improvisation. Teachers of these programs should be more like "good mothers" rather than taskmasters and emphasize the aesthetics. Through many medias children learned to communicate their ideas and be self-expressive (Ruenzel, 1996, p. 31).

By the year 2000, all children in America should start school ready to learn. The specific practices of early childhood professionals have been more closely observed and questioned, therefore it becomes important that teachers clearly articulate what they were doing and why they were doing it. Developmentally appropriate practices bolster a child's self-esteem and independence and provide a foundation for lifelong thinking and learning. The move was to observe and listen to children who have engaged in self-selective play and were given opportunities to work with a variety of flexible

art mediums which would challenge their expression and communication skills. Information should be provided to parents on the aspects of a child's day in a manner that emphasizes total growth and learning (Hostetler, 1992, p.2).

Issues Debated

Two issues were debated: the age of entrance to kindergarten and the curriculum. The Nielsen's study of 1996 examined different kindergarten literacy frameworks (environment and events), the appropriate age for kindergarten entrance and the effect of age on achievement. Parents, teachers, and state departments of education for years have debated these questions. Nielsen's study (1996) determined that the academic difference between younger and older kindergarten and first-grade children were invalid by third grade no matter what their age of entry, extra year programs or retentions. The focus should not be on the child's chronological age but on the appropriateness of the curriculum being taught (Nielsen, 1996,p.259).

The comparison by Nielsen (1996) was between the developmental versus the academic or the child-centered versus the content-centered program. The belief in past years was that children would learn to read in first grade where formal instruction began. The high rate of failure and

retentions had educators in the 1920s look at readiness for emergent readers start before grade one. Instruction for reading readiness took either the path of maturation (if the child was ready he/she would benefit) and experience (the notion that prior knowledge, language, and other factors foster the literacy of a child.) Educators recognized that home and school experiences were instrumental in learning (Nielsen, 1996). Through the influence of storybooks, writing, and playing, all major roles in literacy development, enhancement of learning would occur in children. The term reading readiness was replaced with the term emergent literacy that means learning before formal schooling. Children were separated into two groups with regular kindergarten children attending kindergartens near the location of their home and children chronologically young or immature attending developmental kindergartens. The first group focused on mastery learning and whole-group instruction. The second group, the developmental program, had an integrated curriculum that was child-centered and honored what was known about cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. Nielsen (1996) found that no magical age existed for children to enter kindergarten and that enriched literacy curriculum existed where teachers provide an environment where successes occur for each child (Nielsen, 1996).

Retention in kindergarten was sometimes viewed as a remedy for the child who is "unready" to enter first grade and reasoned that providing an extra year of kindergarten would help the child develop the necessary social and/or cognitive capacities for school performance. Most empirical evidence on the effects of kindergarten retention indicated that retention at this level provided little benefit for either school achievement or social adjustment. The study by Zepeda (1993) argued that curriculum and instruction were not based on the way children learned but rather on a predesignated standard to which they felt all children conform. Zepeda's study (1993) pointed out that stress behavior increases in classrooms that were developmentally inappropriate kindergartens. In developmentally appropriate kindergarten programs the classroom was structured with more centers, story and music activities causing less anxiety to be exhibited by students (Zepeda, 1993, p.57).

Demographic Characteristics

Demographic characteristics should be considered when discussing children who are retained. Retained children appeared to be coming from lower-income, female-headed households where the employed mothers of the retained children worked in jobs that were lower in status than employed

mothers of the non-retained group. Additionally, retained children have not had previous preschool experience and were disproportionately ethnic minority children and language minority children (Zepeda, 1993, p. 73).

The educational system had to examine the nature of the developing child and the ecological context in which the child was conditioned, to understand how children responded to instructional approaches. Findings suggested that certain teaching practices place children at risk for school failure. This was disproportionate among groups who could little afford this stress of failure (Zepeda, 1993).

Research by Lessen-Firestone (1996) provided that retention was not a successful long-term intervention for most children, although promoting them into first grade where they would fail was not acceptable either. This article stressed that rather than having all children master material, educators needed to help children learn and develop to their highest potential. The most successful program was a classroom where all children succeeded to their greatest potential. Educators who were in developmentally appropriate classrooms would see late bloomers emerge with the expected social and academic abilities (Lessen-Firestone, 1996, p.4).

Abouzeid's study (1994) was concerned with two preschool groups, one a private, predominately upper-middle income group and the other a private, subsidized daycare center of a low-income group from a metropolitan area. The importance of early parent involvement was stressed in the program if a problem of mastery of information was identified. The question Abouzeid (1994) asked was: Are teacher-directed literacy, a "hands-off" approach, cheating children from the necessary experiences needed for success in preschool program when compared to a developmentally appropriate approach, a "hands-on" approach (Abouzeid, 1994).

The concern over the quality of programs was voiced as increased enrollment was observed in preschools. One of the reasons this occurred was the increase of two parents in the work force and more children not being taught skills previously taught at home in generations past. Two critical factors faced preschools: 1) knowing the appropriate literacy activities to provide the child and 2) knowing the appropriate time to introduce those activities (Abouzeid, 1994).

Comparing the two groups of subjects, similar performances were found in both groups on alphabet recitation and the range of name writing ability. Those comparisons examined, closely the performance of

children on literacy tasks rather than concluding groups classified by family income out perform others on certain literacy measures. The findings supported previous research linking literacy acquisition with literacy experiences in the home (Abouzeid, 1994, p. 5). Abouzeid (1994) realized that many children were ready for print experiences and should be involved in such activities in the curriculum. Teachers of preschoolers must be sure that they were not withholding information or at the other extreme teaching all the same concepts to all children. Teachers who took into consideration and acknowledged in their teaching that each child comes with different degrees of understanding towards literacy tasks were more successful in the learning situations. Abouzeid (1994) suggested that an integrated literacy program with appropriate language-based activities, play, writing, alphabet, phonics, labeling, and drawing was best for preschoolers. Children were active learners from birth and because of the time spent in preschool, teachers should become aware of the knowledge children bring with them. This knowledge was to be extended through print-rich environments that foster literacy development (Abouzeid, 1994, p.5).

Intervention Programs

Jane Seawell's study (1992) dealt with intervention programs in preschool. Some of the outcomes suggested a positive prosocial behavior, the experience may be of particular value, both in short and long-term, for children who were 'at-risk' for academic and social failure (Seawell, 1992, p. 1).

Many states provide some type of preschool program such as Head Start, that targets at-risk children. Accountability of those programs must be evaluated. Early studies found that for the most part, academic advantages these students had attained through preschool participation tended to fade by the third grade (Seawell, 1992, pg. 2). Seawell (1992) found that positive school behavior was a realistic expectation resulting from a preschool intervention program. The use of a teacher rating scale of students' classroom behavior would seem to have potential for enhancing the body of information used in evaluating the effectiveness of a preschool program. Teachers were able to measure the child's behavior and age appropriate skills taught by observing and comparing them to a large sample of children of their own age. This is expected to be a more effective means of evaluating a

preschool program and hopefully will predict future adjustments of children identified at risk (Seawell, 1992, p.3).

Parent Participation

Successful early educational intervention programs were reported in Lazar and Darlington's (1982) report, to have a parent involvement segment. In the area of parental participation, studies supported the importance of parent involvement in the students' school life. Subjects of early educational intervention programs showed higher and more lasting gains if their parents were actively involved in their learning. The 1982 research showed that the educational gains were higher and lasted longer when parents were actively involved with their preschooler's program. Children who are high achievers have parents with high expectations of them (Seawell, 1992, p.4).

Early intervention programs that promoted age-appropriate activities, informal learning such as play, opportunities of choice, participation, and discussion discouraged teaching formal academic subjects. Age and gender were influences in retention rates. The number of subjects involved in Chapter 1, could be a result of early detection of need in this area and could reverse in future years. Parent's participation in school activities were associated with the child's success (Seawell, 1992).

The last article, Bowlin (1991) studied the effects of preschool on achievement in grades first through fourth in reading and math. With the great pressure on schools to score highly on achievement tests, kindergartens may become more teacher directed and knowledge focused. The fear was that preschools would be pressured to follow this same path (Bowlin, 1991, p.4).

Does preschool enrollment give at-risk children a better chance to succeed at the elementary level? Miller and Bizzell (1983) studied four different preschool programs and concluded that by the end of second grade most experimental groups showed substantial losses from their scores at the end of pre-kindergarten. Experience on academic growth of the experimental group exceeded the control group at every level through fifth except for math at second grade (Bowlin, 1991, p.4).

Enrollment of students in preschool programs gives many at-risk children multifold dividends which would result for society many savings in remedial education, health services and society in future years. Participation in preschool programs reduced placement in compensatory education, less retentions, and more students graduating from high school (Bowlin, 1991, p.5).

Play is a principle source of development in the early years. Play encourages imagination, initiative, and the desire to perform and learn skills for self-direction. The results of Bowlin 's (1991) study showed no significant difference in the math and reading scores of children in grades first through fourth. Research must continue to identify the effects of preschool programs and the significant difference in the learning and development of children (Bowlin, 1991).

Present Study in Relation to Previous Studies

The relationship of this research to previous related literature studies was general in nature. In reviewing the literature, the study found a significant amount of information and research on the effects of preschool on later education. Positive achievement appeared in reading and math but leveled out after third grade (Bowlin, 1991). Higher achievement appeared in children who had more than one year of preschool and were involved in early intervention programs for at-risk students (Bowlin, 1991).

The studies showed that preschool programs had positive effects on influencing children socially and economically as well as promoting a successful lifestyle which they could carry into their adult life (Hostetter, 1992).

Schultz (1995) found preschools differ in quality, the teachers, the amount of teacher's education, and the curriculum being used in the programs because of the lack of state and federal guidelines. Abouzeid (1994) found that it was important for preschools to take children at their ability level and extend that ability to it's fullest. Preschools have the capacity of building self-esteem, self-confidence, communication, and relationship building skills with children (Ruenzel, 1996). Children coming from a preschool program should be treated as individuals when entering public school (Nielsen, 1996).

The research focused on the years 1994 to 1995 and 1995 to 1996 to see how children who had attended preschool programs compared to children who had not attended preschool in relationship to the literature reviewed. If the hypothesis was proven, then children who had attended preschool would have less retention and fewer students enrolled in compensatory education classes.

Chapter 3

METHODS

Introduction

The purpose of this research was to investigate whether the performance of students in kindergarten, first, second, and third grades was improved by the attendance in a preschool program.

The sample included an Group A (students who had attended preschool) and a Group B (students who hadn't attended preschool). The students were alphabetized by grade level and separated into the two groups (Group A and Group B), then every third name became part of the sample group. With approximately 60 students at the kindergarten and first grade level and 50 at the second and third grade level, the numbers in the samples differed per grade with selection randomly done to assure an unbiased sampling.

The subjects of Group A and Group B were from low to middle socioeconomic class with the majority being white and living in the rural area of Ronceverte in Greenbrier County in West Virginia. The demographic characteristics were lower-income, female-headed households, that had no

previous preschool experience and were disproportionally ethnic in minority (Zill, 1995).

The groups will be compared according to the number of retentions and the number of students enrolled in compensatory classes in kindergarten, first, second, and third grades for the years 1994 to 1995 and 1995 to 1996.

A longitudinal study of the students focused on examining the sample of students after one or two years of preschool as opposed to no preschool.

Data acquired for the study was:

1) individual listing of children from preschools
2) Title 1 Reading and Title 1 Math participants for the two years
3) a list of students in speech or other compensatory programs
4) a list of all students at Ronceverte Elementary for the years 1994 to1995 and 1995 to1996 and in grades kindergarten, first, second, and third.

Independent variables included will be: 1) years attended preschool, 2) preschool programs attended; Ronceverte Community Nursery School, Head Start, and Kiddie Kondo, and 3) the gender and the age for each student.

Dependent variables included will be: 1) the number of retentions, 2) the grade of retention, and 3) enrollment in compensatory education programs.

Statement of the Hypotheses

The following null hypothesis was tested:

Ho: No significant difference would be identified in student performance in kindergarten, first, second, and third grades for students who attended preschool and those who did not attend preschool in the years 1994 to 1995 and 1995 to 1996, when looking at retentions and enrollment in compensatory education programs.

The alternate hypothesis is:

Ha: A significant difference would be identified in student performance in kindergarten, first, second, and third grades for students who attended preschool compared to those who did not attend preschool in the years 1994 to 1995 and 1995 to 1996, when looking at retentions and enrollment in compensatory education programs.

Instrumentation

A list of all children in kindergarten, first, second, and third grades was compiled for the years 1994 to 1995 and 1995 to 1996. The classes were

then alphabetized by grade level, students who had attended preschool and those who had not attended preschool. Every third name was placed in one of the sample groups.

Students who were retained or received Title 1 Math or Title 1 Reading, or other compensatory education will be identified. Group A was compared to the Group B to see whether the two groups differed significantly.

Research Design

A descriptive study describes and interprets conditions or relationships that exist, opinions that are held, processes that are on going , effects that are evident or trends that are developing in the study. This research also encompasses chi-square for independence and compared it statistically (Best, 1977, p.116).

The descriptive research was nonexperimental in that it dealt with the relationships between variables. The variable in this case was whether the subjects in the sample groups had attended or had not attended preschool. In this research project the variable of preschool had not been manipulated by the study but had already taken place and was related to the present success of the subjects in the Group A versus the Group B

This study compiled the data concerning the variable of preschool as it related to success in kindergarten, first, second, and third grades. The findings from this study would be able to be reviewed and repeated to check the validity of the hypothesis.

Data Collection Methods

The data of the subjects will be gathered by forming two groups; Group A (Preschool) and Group B (No-Preschool).

Student records from the compensatory education classes at Ronceverte Elementary were examined to determine whether they attended or had not attended preschool. A list of students who had been retained was compiled for grades kindergarten, first, second, and third for the years 1994 to 1995 and 1995 to 1996 and then divided into those students who had attended or had not attended preschool.

The study designated appropriate, logical, and mutually exclusive categories for tabulation of the data.

Data Analysis Method

The total number of each sample group for the grades kindergarten, first, second, and third was compiled. The numbers of students in Group A and Group B was compared to determine what the difference in numbers was

in the two groups. The chi-square for independence was used to determine the difference between the Group A and Group B. If the level of significance is that alpha<. 05, this would result in the rejection of the null hypothesis. If through careful analysis alpha>.05, a significant difference then the alternate hypothesis will be accepted.

Chapter 4

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Summary of Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate two groups of students: those who had attended preschool and those who had not attended preschool before starting kindergarten. The students studied were enrolled in Ronceverte Elementary in grades kindergarten, first, second, and third for the years 1994 to 1995 and 1995 to 1996. The Group A included all students who had attended preschool and the Group B was randomly selected from the remaining students in the consecutive grades who had not attended preschool. Students who had not attended Ronceverte Elementary for all grades were excluded from the study. The number of students in the study for1994 to 1995 and 1995 to 1996 who had not attended preschool are 210 students compared to 73 students in 1994 to 1995 and 86 students in 1995 to 1996 who had preschool. The numbers of students in the groups were adjusted randomly so that Group A and Group B were of equal size. Group A's size for the individual grades kindergarten and first were adjusted in 1994 to 1995 to make certain both sample groups were of equal size.

Number of students before random selection

	Preschool	*No-Preschool*
1994-1995	*73*	*210*
1995-1996	*86*	*210*

Table 1

Sample sizes for study (Both Preschool and No-Preschool Groups)

Group sizes for study after random selection occurred

Groups	*kindergarten*	*first*	*second*	*third*
1994-1995	*25*	*21*	*11*	*12*
1995-1996	*25*	*20*	*21*	*11*

Table 2

After the control and experimental samples were grouped equally, lists were received from Title 1 Reading, Title 1 Math, Speech, Special Education, and retentions were attained from permanent record cards. The samples were then marked from the lists obtained for compensatory education programs and retentions: students with no previous preschool and students who attended preschool, in any grade for 1994 to 1995 and 1995 to 1996. The outcome of this chi-square for independence was tallied to show historically pre-existing

facts that have been gathered systematically and empirically included in the study.

After gathering all data and separating the data into two groups; Group A (preschool) and Group B (no-preschool) the feasibility of gathering random samples for comparison of the groups needed to be altered in each group. Instead of taking every third name as initially planned the size of the group in each grade level and year was determined by the smallest size of the sample group being most times the experimental group. The students were taken randomly out of the Group B so that each of the sample sizes were equal per grade level.

Descriptive Analysis

This chapter contains the analysis performed on the data, which assisted in either confirming or rejecting the hypothesis proposed in the study. The information presented will systematically associate the factor of preschool on the enrollment in compensatory education and retentions.

Through chi-square for independence, the study showed that having attended preschool or not having attended preschool manipulated the number of students enrolled in compensatory education and retentions.

The information presented in this chapter is divided into the parts: a) the grade levels: kindergarten, first, second, and third; b) Group A, the students having attended preschool and Group B, students not attending preschool in the school years of 1994 to 1995 and 1995 to 1996.

No data was taken into account concerning the teachers at each grade level or their instructional practices. The constant being that the two years studied were in the same school with no change in teachers and with basically the same textbooks and curriculum being offered during the two year span.

Table 3 Number of students in samples after random selection

Grade & year	***Students -Preschool***	***Students-No-Preschool***
K 1994-1995	*25*	*25*
K 1995-1996	*25*	*25*
1 1994-1995	*21*	*21*
1 1995-1996	*20*	*20*
2 1994-1995	*11*	*11*
2 1995-1996	*21*	*21*
3 1994-1995	*12*	*12*
3 1995-1996	*11*	*11*

146 students were studied in both Group A and Group B. Through the total number of students in the study, the following data was gathered. The number of students enrolled in compensatory education and retentions. The total of 8 classes studied. (2 of kindergarten, 2 of first, 2 of second, 2 of third) for the years of 1994 to 1995 and 1995 to 1996. The mean, median, standard deviation, and the variance of the experimental and control group.

Table 4 Statistic Information of the preschool and no preschool groups

	Preschool	*No Preschool*
Sum of Compensatory and retained students	*26*	*71*
Number of grades	*8*	*8*
Mean	*3.25*	*8.88*
Median	*3*	*7.5*
Standard deviation	*1.98*	*2.7*
Variance	*3.93*	*7.27*

Demographic Data

This demographic study consisted of three classrooms in each of the grade levels: kindergarten, first, second, and third. All teachers were female with the average age of the teachers being 40. The range of teaching experience was from 5 years to 22 years. Four teachers of the twelve have a masters degree in some area of education. Two teachers are working towards their masters degree. All teachers attended one or more Governors Conferences to further their education.

Table 5

Demographic Data of Teachers

		Frequency	*Percentage*
Gender	*female*	*12*	*100%*
	male	*0*	*0%*
Age	*25-39*	*3*	*25%*
	40 & up	*9*	*75%*
Degrees	*BA*	*12*	*100%*
	MA	*4*	*30%*
Governors Conference	*attended*	*12*	*100%*

The study focused on the differences between the students who attended preschool and those who did not attend preschool. The number of students enrolled before random sampling are: Kindergarten 59 and 58, First 55 and 56, Second 61 and 49, Third 61 and 55, for the years 1994 to 1995 and 1995 to 1996. 454 students were enrolled in these four grades at Ronceverte Elementary for the years of 1994 to 1995 and 1995 to 1996 or 236 students in 1994 to 1995 and 218 students in 1995 to 1996. The gender of the students was not taken into account during the study. Out of the population for 1994 to 1995 the sample sizes were 50, 40, 22, 24. The sample size for 1995 to 1996 were 50, 42, 42, and 22. Students who weren't enrolled consecutively at Ronceverte Elementary were taken out of the population before the samples were attained. The attainment of the non-preschool group was done randomly.

Table 6 Comparison of students in sample and grade levels

1994-1995	*grade*	*# of students in grade*	*# of students in sample*
	K	*59*	*50*
	1	*55*	*40*
	2	*61*	*22*
	3	*61*	*24*

1995-1996

K	*58*	*50*
1	*56*	*42*
2	*49*	*42*
3	*55*	*22*

Table 7 Number of students in the samples and the percentage of students involved in the study

1994-1995	*grade*	*number of students*	*percentage*
	K	*50*	*23.5%*
	1	*40*	*18.8%*
	2	*22*	*10.3%*
	3	*24*	*11.3%*
212 total students		*136 total*	*64%*
in Ronceverte Elementary (K-3)		*Sampled (K-3)*	

1995-1996	*grade*	*number of students*	*percentage*
	K	*50*	*24.5%*
	1	*42*	*20.5%*
	2	*42*	*20.5%*
	3	*22*	*10.7%*
204 total students		*156 total*	*76%*
in Ronceverte Elementary (K-3)		*Sampled (K-3)*	

Demographic Data of Samples

The study focused on all students enrolled at Ronceverte Elementary in classes kindergarten, first, second, and third grades in the years 1994 to 1995 and 1995 to 1996. The samples were predetermined from the population by either being enrolled in a preschool program or not being enrolled in a preschool program. After excluding students who had not attended school exclusively at Ronceverte Elementary the lists were randomly equated for both the experimental and control groups per grade level.

From the random samples for 1994 to 1995 and 1995 to 1996, a total of 146 subjects in the experimental group with 26 (17.8%) receiving compensatory education or being retained. The control group had 146

subjects in the two year span with 71 (48.6%) receiving compensatory education or being retained.

Table 8

Demographic Data of Samples

	Preschool			*No Preschool*		
Grade level	Students	*comp.*	*& ret.*	*Students*	*comp.*	*& ret.*
K-1994-1995	*25*	*5*	*1*	*25*	*6*	*7*
1-1994-1995	*21*	*1*	*1*	*21*	*3*	*4*
2-1994-1995	*11*	*2*	*0*	*11*	*7*	*4*
3-1994-1995	*12*	*5*	*0*	*12*	*7*	*0*
K-1995-1996	*25*	*1*	*0*	*25*	*10*	*2*
1-1995-1996	*20*	*3*	*1*	*20*	*6*	*1*
2-1995-1996	*21*	*3*	*2*	*21*	*6*	*2*
3-1995-1996	*11*	*1*	*0*	*11*	*3*	*3*
totals	***146***	***21***	***5***	***146***	***48***	***23***

Total number of students sampled at Ronceverte Elementary with Preschool and No-Preschool and the numbers by grade of those in compensatory education and retained.

Analysis of Statistical Data

The null hypothesis is reviewed in this chapter. All factor findings are included in the tables but only the significant factor of preschool attendance is reviewed: the hypothesis uses the chi-square for independence to determine the difference between the students who had attended preschool and the students who had not attended preschool.

Descriptive and Inferential Statistical Findings

Findings Concerning Null Hypothesis

A significant difference was seen in student performance in kindergarten, first, second, and third grades for students who attended preschool and those who did not attend preschool in the years 1994 to 1995 and 1995 to 1996, when looking at retentions and enrollment in compensatory education programs.

The null hypothesis, that no difference between students who attended preschool and those who did not attend preschool was rejected. The mean score of those having attended preschool was 3.25 with a standard deviation of 1.98 compared to the mean score of students not attending preschool of 8.88 with a standard deviation of 2.7. This shows that enrollment in compensatory education and retentions more than double when a child had

not experienced preschool. Analysis using chi-square for independence measured the distribution of students being retained and enrolled in compensatory education by those who have attended preschool compared to those who haven't attended preschool. If no significant difference was shown the distribution should be equal. Through data gathered the study showed that what was observed and what was expected were not equal and therefore a significant difference was shown.

Table 9 and Table 10.

Table 9 Observed Data

	Retained	*Compensatory*	*Non-ret. non-comp.*	*Total*
Attended				
Pre-School	*5*	*21*	*120*	*146*
Did not attend				
Preschool	*23*	*48*	*75*	*146*
Totals	*28*	*69*	*195*	*292*

Table 10 Expected Data

	Retained	*Compensatory*	*Non-ret non-comp.*	*Total*
Attended				
Pre-School	*14*	*34.5*	*97.5*	*146*
Did not attend				
Preschool	*14*	*34.5*	*97.5*	*146*
Totals	*28*	*69*	*195*	*292*

Summary of Statistics

In summary, there was a significant difference between students in kindergarten, first, second, and third grades who had attended preschool and those that had not attended preschool with a significant level of $p < .005$. The difference of the observed frequency and the expected frequency was 2. This is shown in detail on the graphs at the end of the paper. Therefore, the hypothesis is rejected because of the observed difference in the two sample groups compared to the expected difference. The assumption that students benefit from enrollment in preschool programs by promoting success in school, preventing retentions and enrollment in compensatory education.

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the circumstances that surrounded enrollment in compensatory education and the number of retentions in grades kindergarten, first, second and third and whether this was influenced by having been enrolled in a preschool program or not having been enrolled in a preschool program. There was no investigation of preschool curricula or programs that students received, that attributed to the numbers enrolled in compensatory education or retentions. The gender of the students was not considered a factor when looking at the number of children in compensatory education or retentions.

The constants for the student population were: 1) all teachers were female, 2) all teachers had taught the grade they were in for several years, 3) the curriculum was the same in all grades for both years, and 4) all students had attended Ronceverte Elementary.

The nonparametric test used was the chi-square test that applies to discrete data, counted rather than measured values. The test is a test of independence. The chi-square test merely estimates the likelihood that some factor (preschool) other than chance accounts for the apparent relationship in the enrollment of compensatory education programs and retentions. The null hypothesis states that there is no difference in preschool and no preschool. This study merely evaluates the probability (the variable of preschool attendance was independent) that the observed relationship results from chance. Through observation compared to the expected, the chi-square of independence shows significant rejection of the hypothesis at the $<.05$ level of significance because preschool attendance to had a significant relationship to retentions and enrollment in compensatory education.

Summary of Findings

Analysis of the preschool samples and the no-preschool samples showed a favorable significant difference. The significant difference occurred both in retentions and enrollment in compensatory education. The difference was seen at all grade levels: kindergarten, first, second, and third for both years studied.

The result of the study points to a need for early intervention with children to promote the benefits of preschool that contribute to a decline in retentions and enrollment in compulsory education. Since the family structure has changed, with many homes having two working parents or a single parent situation, preschools are an answer to a diverse society in that they work with children on educational and developmental needs that at one time were taught in the home. The preschool situation gives the child more time to foster a positive relationship between adults, other than parents and with peers that aid in developmental growth.

Discussion

The results of the present study were constrained by several factors.

1) the limitation of three preschool programs as feeder schools into Ronceverte Elementary
2) the limit of years that preschools maintained enrollment records (five years)
3) the samples from the population, that had to be adjusted to make the groups of equal sizes per grade level, therefore not all groups for the four grade levels were equal

4) no data was gathered on gender from the samples of those that had attended preschool or had not attended preschool

Thus, to generalize the findings using the limitations indicated from this study children who have attended preschool have a better chance at success in relation to enrollment in compensatory education programs or retentions.

Much of the literature found that preschool does aid in school success through second grade (Seawell, 1992). This study included third grade for the two years and the findings give support to the link between the success of students who had attended preschool and those who had not attended preschool.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to examine the two sample groups of students, Group A those that had attended preschool and Group B those that had not attended preschool, and its effect on retentions and enrollment in compensatory education classes.

Although two years were examined, 1994 to1995 and 1995 to 1996, with four grade levels studied; kindergarten, first, second, and third the results support the findings presented in the literature readings. These could be the results of:

1. Similarities existing in preschools in their curriculums and practices as suggested by the outcome of the chi-square test of independence which showed significant difference in students with preschool versus those students with no preschool in retentions and enrollment in compensatory education.

2. Those students who have had preschool experience have an advantage over students without preschool experience, in that this is an intervention at a time with students who may be at risk. This intervention gives them skills to promote success in the classroom.

3. That through this study and others, preschool programs provides a significant difference to children and reduces their chances of retention and enrollment in compensatory education.

4. That from the results of this study there should to be some type of compulsory preschool program for all children before entering kindergarten.

Recommendations

1. Continue to investigate the differences between students who had preschool and those who did not have preschool in relation to retentions and enrollment in compensatory education.

2. Track the students from these two years 1994 to 1995 and 1995 to 1996 through high school to see if the difference remains significant or whether it levels off.

3.Analyze other schools to see whether the significant difference is constant for those having preschool compared to those not having preschool.

4. Expand the research to see if there is a difference in relation to gender occurs between those with Preschool and No-Preschool.

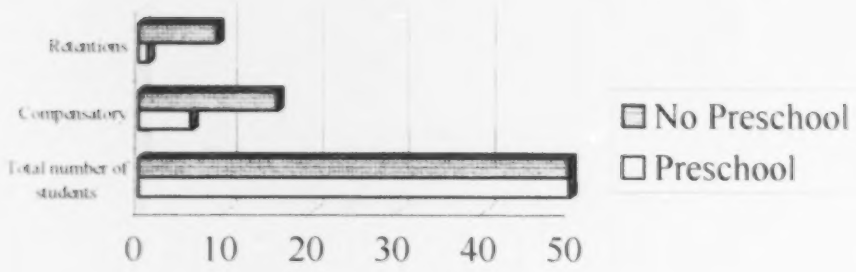
5. Determine if home situation factor into the number of retentions and enrollment in compulsory education, where both parents were in the work force or a single parent home situation existed.

6. Recommend that as many students as possible receive some type of preschool experience before entering a kindergarten program.

7. Recommend that some type of preschool program be adopted into the public schools before entrance into kindergarten.

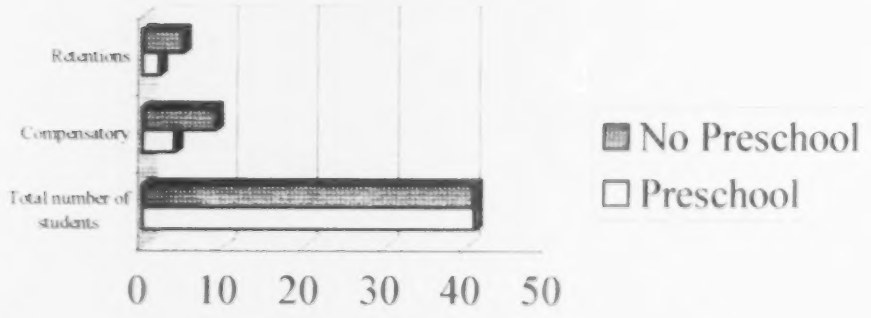
	Preschool	No Preschool
Total number of students	50	50
Compensatory	6	16
Retentions	1	9

Kindergarten 1994-1996



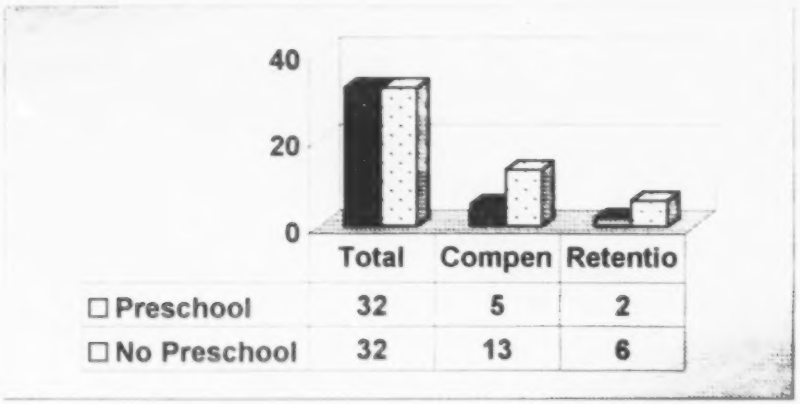
	Preschool	No Preschool
Total number of students	41	41
Compensatory	4	9
Retentions	2	5

First Grade 1994-1996



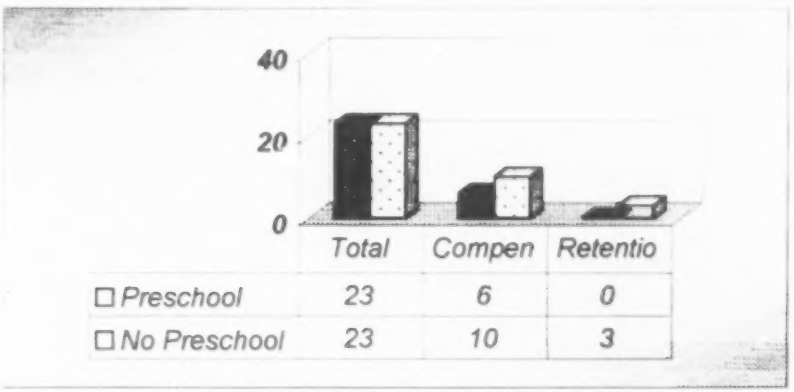
	Preschool	No Preschool
Total number of students	32	32
Compensatory	5	13
Retentions	2	6

Second Grade 1994-1995



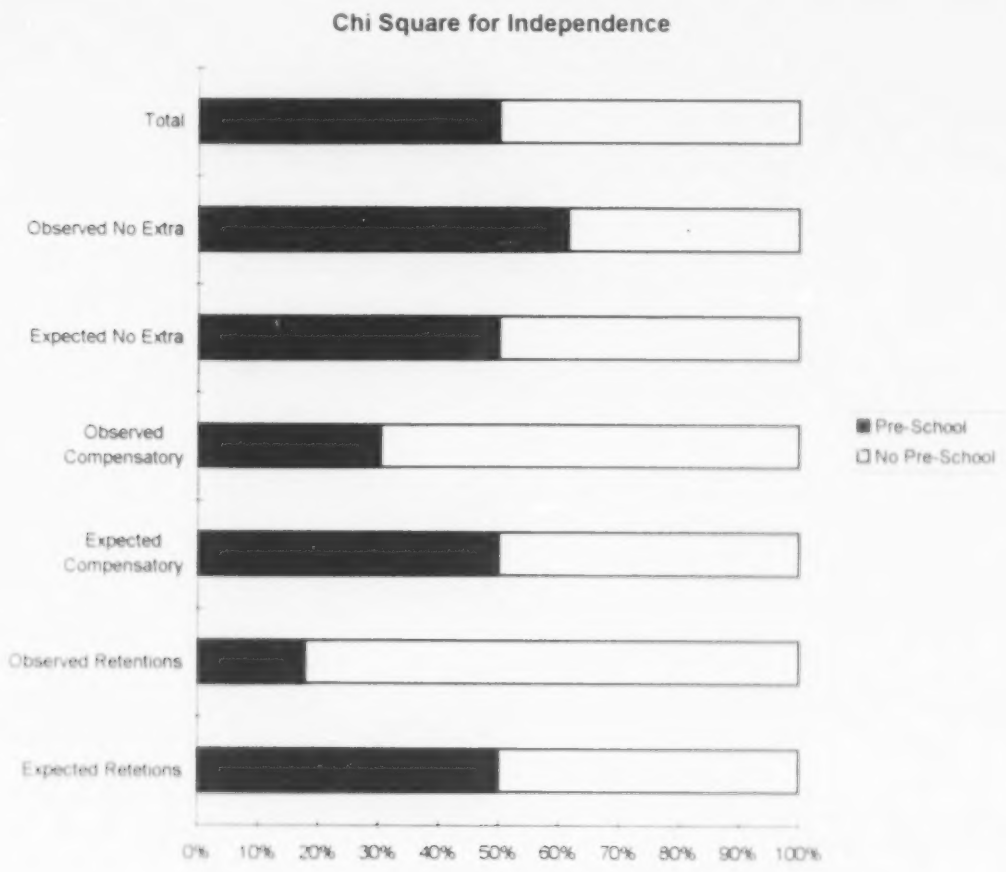
	Preschool	No Preschool
Total number of students	23	23
Compensatory	6	10
Retentions	0	3

Third Grade 1994-1996



Chi Square for Independence

	Expected Retetions	Observed Retentions	Expected Compensatory	Observed Compensatory	Expected No Extra	Observed No Extra	Total
Pre-School	14	5	34.5	21	97.5	120	146
No Pre-School	14	23	34.5	48	97.5	75	146
Total	28	28	69	69	195	195	292



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